

Preliminary Amendment Dated January 24, 2005
Serial No. 10/025,925

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-20. (Canceled).

21. A method for enabling differential visualization of a plurality of aspects of a telecommunication network, said method comprising the steps of:

presenting a background image representation of at least a first of the aspects of the telecommunication network; and

presenting a foreground image representation of at least a second of the aspects of the telecommunication network over the background image representation.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the background image representation is generated from an information set associated with the telecommunication network such that the background image representation contains less than a complete visual representation of the telecommunications network topology.

23. The method of claim 21, wherein the background image representation is a combination of a plurality of unselected views of the telecommunication network and wherein the foreground image representation is a at least one selected views of the telecommunication network.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the step of presenting the foreground image representation comprises displaying the at least one selected view in a distinguishable fashion from the combination of unselected network views forming the background image representation

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to enable the at least one selected view of the telecommunication network to be viewed in context of information contained in the background image representation.

25. The method of claim 23, further comprising the step of moving at least one of the unselected views of the telecommunication network from at least one of the background image representation to the foreground image representation, and the step of moving at least one of the selected views of the telecommunication network from the foreground image representation to the background image representation.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein the step of moving is performed upon receipt of input from an user of a network management tool.

27. The method of claim 21, wherein the background image representation is a reference view of a base model representation; and wherein the foreground image representation is an overlay view of the base model representation.

28. The method of claim 21, wherein the background image representation is grayed out relative to the foreground image representation.

29. The method of claim 21, wherein the first aspect is a physical network topology and wherein the second aspect is a logical network topology.

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30. The method of claim 21, wherein the background image representation and foreground image representation allow simultaneous displays of representations of multiple network technologies available on the telecommunication network.

31. The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of enabling a combination of the background and foreground images to be visible via a Graphical User Interface (GUI) of a network management tool.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the first aspects and second aspect are user-selectable from the plurality of aspects of the telecommunication network via the GUI.

33. The method of claim 21, wherein the first aspect represents physical devices in the telecommunication network and wherein the second aspect represents attributes of the physical devices.

34. The method of claim 21, wherein the foreground image representation is a composite of multiple individual representation of one or more of the aspects of the telecommunication network.

35. A network management tool, comprising:

a display;

a Graphical User Interface (GUI) available via a window on said display, said graphical user interface being configured to provide a network manager with an ability to simultaneously

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display a reference view of a managed telecommunication network and an overlay view of the managed telecommunication network in a distinguishable fashion in said window.

36. The network management tool of claim 35, wherein the reference view and overlay view together comprise a plurality of user selectable aspects of the managed telecommunication network, and wherein the GUI is configured such that the user may choose which aspects should be used to generate at least one of the reference view and the overlay view.

37. The network management tool of claim 35, wherein the overlay view is displayed in relief relative to the reference view.

38. The network management tool of claim 35, wherein the reference view is a view of a base model representation of a network layout containing information about network devices and attributes of the network devices.

39. The network management tool of claim 38, wherein the base model representation is generated from a network information set containing complete information about the underlying telecommunication network, and wherein the base model representation represents less than all of the information contained in the network information set.

40. The network management tool of claim 39, wherein the GUI enables multiple versions of the base model representation to be generated from different aspects of the information contained in the telecommunication information under the control of the user.

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41. The network management tool of claim 39, wherein the GUI enables instructions to be input from a user to enable the user to alter the appearance of the base model representation by selecting different subsets of information from the telecommunication information set to be used to generate the base model representation.

42. The network management tool of claim 41, wherein the telecommunication information set comprises physical topography information associated with network elements on the telecommunication network, logical interconnection information associated with the telecommunication network, status information associated with the network elements, and performance attributes associated with the network elements.

43. The network management tool of claim 35, wherein the display is touch sensitive such that the display is an input device.

44. A method for presenting a visual representation of a telecommunication network layout, said method comprising the steps of:

obtaining a information set containing information relevant to the telecommunication network layout;

generating a representation of at least a portion of the information set, said representation having a background image portion indicative of at least a first aspect of the telecommunication network layout, said background image being derived from at least a first data subset of the information set, and said representation having a foreground image indicative of at least a second

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aspect of the telecommunication network layout, said foreground image being derived from at least a second data subset of the information set.

45. The method of claim 44, wherein the background image is a presented in a diluted color format and wherein the foreground image is presented in a saturated color format.

46. The method of claim 44, wherein at least one of the first and second data subsets are user selectable to enable the user to control the appearance of at least one of the foreground image and background image.